

**April 11, 2020**

Dear Taylor Students,

It is with a heavy heart that I sit in my apartment and write this letter because as I do, each of you is hopefully somewhere safe, presumably at home and not together on campus, while some reading this may find yourself still on campus, unable to go home. Campus is quiet and just not the same as it is when each of you is here to fill the residence halls, the classrooms, the DC, and the sidewalks and various green patches of grass. We are living in unprecedented times, and I am sure you have heard that phrase more than once in the last week or two, but we truly are living through a moment in history. I have spent the last weeks trying to figure out what all of this means and why myself and so many others have had to experience a different last few months at Taylor than what we had planned for, and probably not to your surprise, I am still searching for an answer. Yet, here I am – nothing has changed and nothing is as I would have hoped for, but I am certain of this:

We are all experiencing this same thing, together. Individually we may be experiencing different emotions and thoughts about what is happening, but we are all here experiencing this **together** in the midst of a world of confusion, uncertainty, fear, frustration, questions, doubts, sadness, newness, joy, love, compassion, and hope.

It can be easy in these next few months to become so overwhelmed with emotion that we forget that the earth is still moving and that the Lord is still in control. I want to challenge you to embrace the uncertainty and the confusion, but do not stay there. Choose to see the joy, to see the love and the hope that will never fade – it is there if we **choose** to see it. In these coming weeks, allow the Lord to open your eyes to see the ways in which He is working in the midst of heartache and pain, how He is speaking to you in moments when you sit on your bed weeping, how He is transforming hearts of others and bringing them to know Him. Yes, this is a weird

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time (it is more than okay to admit that), but, I believe that it is in these weird, unexpected times where the Lord can and will do amazing things.

Lean into this moment, lean into *these* moments. Keep in contact with one another – call, FaceTime, text, or email if you are into that. Do not forget that it is in these moments, too, where the Lord will draw us closer together as His people.

As students of Taylor, you are a special group of people – do not ever forget that! My prayer is that you (and I am talking the broader campus community) would come out of this weird season stronger than ever before! It is my prayer that you would come back to this campus, to your halls, to your wings, to your classes, stronger. It is my prayer that years and years of Taylor students will be impacted years later by the ways each of you **choose** to invest in one another right now. This is my prayer for each of you and for Taylor University.

Jacob Gerding

MAHE Graduate, 2020